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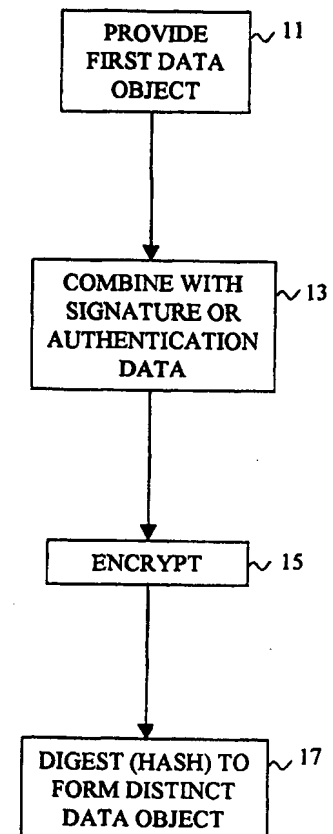
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(54) Title: METHOD OF AUTHENTICATING OR "DIGITALLY SIGNING" DIGITAL DATA OBJECTS

## (57) Abstract

A data object, such as a document, is combined or associated with signature or authentication data, such as a time-stamp or signature. Both the data object and the signature data are encrypted. Finally, a distinct data object is generated (digested or hashed) from the encrypted data object and signature data, the distinct data object has characteristics determined by the data object and the signature data. The data object may be hashed or digested prior to being combined with the signature data.



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